

Confidential

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Correspondence between Mr. N. Dandekar and Mr. Vinod B. Sheth,
Member General Council from Gujarat

1. Extract from the Letter of Resignation from Mr. Vinod B. Sheth

I have been an active member of the Swatantra Party since long at the instance of our beloved leader Shri Rajaji and had contested the Assembly Election in 1962, just to put the fair principles of the Party before the public. I devoted some time and energy for the furtherance of basic principles of the party particularly those concerning the services in social fields. Besides being the President of the Party, I was taken up in the General Council and also in the State Executive for which I feel obliged. The recent developments in the Party and outside the Party leads me to think that I will not be able to make a positive contribution to the Party which is vivisected by extraneous influences of some caste and class ridden groups who had no other goal to achieve except to serve their personal motives. I also doubt very much whether, in view of fast developments taking place in political arena, this small party of intellectuals, will manage to survive, both numerically and financially. By numerical strength of the Party, I mean the Party represents microscopic minority of the population. The most surprising and painful aspect of the Party is that the class of persons for whom the Party exists do not endeavour whole-heartedly to strengthen the Party. On the contrary, this class, in order to keep its entity in fact chooses to feed the parties which subscribe to the view contrary to those of the Swatantra Party. It is no use branding them selfish but it is surprising how short-sighted they are in ensuring their own ultimate destruction. I think it is no use trying to serve the cause of any class which though capable of looking after itself having vast resources at its command is apathetic to summons to wage its own struggle. I think the Chamber of Commerce of the country can better look after their mercantile and other interests.

I have no misgivings about ideological background of the Party as a part of national struggle in industrial and commercial field, but I think my services to this party will not be as much useful to it as to other social institutions dedicated to upliftment of the down-trodden class of society.

I have decided to leave this Party with open mind and heart and also feel mental agony of leaving my trusted friends and guides.

I will not hesitate to help the Party in any social activity undertaken for the cause of the public welfare.

2. Extract from Mr. Dandekar's Reply to Mr. Vinod Sheth

Let me say at once that while I agree with almost every thing you have said in your letter of resignation, I differ on one important point. The Swatantra does not stand for a "Class", -- despite the accusation to contrary levelled against it ever since Jawaharlal Nehru's days, namely, that it stood for "Rajas, Maharajas, Capitalists and Zamindars". If, indeed, it stood for a class, I would have left it quite some time ago.

As I see it, the Party stands for a "System" superior to "Socialism", viz., a system compounded of four elements :-

- (i) The Constitution of India as originally framed, with :-
 - Fundamental Rights
 - Supremacy of the Judiciary
 - Secularism
 - Democratic Institutions, Processes and Procedures.

- (ii) Free or Private Enterprise, coupled with restraints against the exploitation of consumers and workers which otherwise results from the excesses (greed and selfishness) of private enterprise.
- (iii) Public or State Enterprise confined mainly to the field of public utilities (both physical utilities and service utilities), so as to provide the country with an adequate and efficient "infra-structure", without which rapid economic and social progress is impossible.

Now, that is a position from which I shall never resile. And it therefore heartened me to read the following sentence in your resignation.

' I have no misgiving about the ideological background of the Party as part of the national struggle in the industrial and commercial fields.....'

If, therefore, your decision to leave the Party had been only because you felt your services would be more useful in working with "other social institutions dedicated to the upliftment of the down-trodden class of society" than by remaining in the Party, I would have quite understood. But I am disturbed by what seems to be your more compelling reason, namely (in your words), that "the class of persons for whom the Party exists do not endeavour whole-heartedly to strengthen the Party. On the contrary, this class, in order to keep its entity intact, chooses to feed the Parties which subscribe to views contrary to those of the Swatantra Party.....(etc., etc.)"
